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LONDON ASSOCIATION in Aid of
MORAVIAN MISSIONS.

The Great Adventure

OR

The Spirit and the Task of Moravian Missions.

By **Bishop A. Ward,**
OF THE

GENERAL MORAVIAN MISSION BOARD.

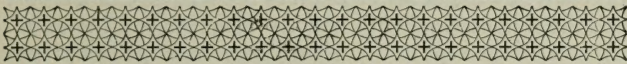
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~~Rev. EDGAR SWAINSON, Secretary.~~

CHARLES HOBDAY, Esq., *Chairman and Hon. Secretary.*



JOHN HUS. Martyred July 6, 1415.



I.—THE GREAT ADVENTURE.

TWO hundred years ago there were very few Christian missionaries in the world. How could it be otherwise? First, the Mohammedan world had interposed itself between Christendom and Heathendom; then the Reformation movement had split Christendom and diverted its attention to new issues; finally, when the Wars of Religion were over, the Peace of Westphalia had recognised, as accomplished facts, theories that had turned upside down the conceptions on which the statecraft of Europe had been based for centuries. Among those things which had come to stay was the system of National Churches, and this was accepted, in spite of the protest of the Pope, as existent in fact, and justifiable, nay, even necessary, in theory. “*Cuius regio, eius religio.*” The will of the Sovereign, or, in a republic, that of the majority, imposed upon each country its form of worship, and the Church was co-extensive with the State. There was no escape from it but by emigration. It followed that conversely the religion was limited to its own State. So Gustavus Vasa, King of Sweden, when he found that he had heathen subjects in Lapland, had appointed two Lutheran pastors to convert them; but he had never thought of sending missionaries to convert any other heathen outside his own State.

Even the so-called Catholic Church was not unaffected by the growth of Nationalism. accompanied, as it was of

necessity, by the decay of Latin as the language of Europe, and the enhanced value of national language and literature. French priests kept to French territory, and Spanish priests to Spanish territory, in the scramble for the partition of the New World; for outside their own boundaries they were regarded, not as bearers of a common Gospel, but as outposts of a foreign power, whose language was a symbol of its alienism, which even the common use of Latin in the Missal could not cloak or atone for.

“The open door gives the open eye,” says the proverb. This was the simple truth about the beginning of Missions two hundred years ago. (In more recent times it has more often been the open eye that saw the way to open the door.) Those who first tried to preach the Gospel to heathen folk belonged almost entirely to colonising races. Being moved with compassion, they taught the people at their own doors in their own dominions. Three or four of them, exceptions to the rule, were German Pietists, who, being Lutherans, went at the call of the Lutheran King of Denmark to serve in his Indian domains.

The Church at home was beginning to awake to its duty towards its own sons and daughters abroad, and from unselfish service for its own there was bound to spring sooner or later sacrifice for the sake of those whom it had not yet learnt to regard as its own. For when great souls, such as Eliot, Carey, and Martyn, start out to serve their brethren, they do not know where to draw the line. But two hundred years ago there were few who believed in the possibility of converting the heathen, whilst there were many who regarded the suggestion as well-nigh flying in the face of Providence. Things were at a crisis, when a miracle happened.

The teaching of Wycliffe, transplanted to her own country by the Bohemian wife of Richard II., had created the Hussite movement, from which sprang the *Unitas Fratrum*—the Brotherhood Church, or Brethren's Church. It had flourished through fitful persecution, but had gone down during the Thirty Years' War in a welter of blood through one of the most systematic persecutions ever known. Comenius, its last Bishop, an exile, handed on his episcopate to his son-in-law in faith that "a hidden seed" would survive and spring up to new life. The son-in-law passed on the trust to his son, and at last the old man's faith was rewarded.

God called to life the Hidden Seed in the Moravian branch of the *Unitas*, and gave it a home on the estates of Count Zinzendorf in Saxony. It was a mere handful that found its way thither in 1722, and the conditions on which freedom was granted were exile and poverty; those who left the homeland could take nothing with them. For ten years they and the Count, and those whom they drew to them as with a magnet, prepared for the task, whatever it might be, which God would show them in His own time, doing the work that was nearest until that time should come. Some set their hearts on preaching to the heathen. They even began to prepare themselves definitely for that work, though for the present these men, who had never seen the sea and had no connexion of any kind with lands and peoples beyond the sea, did not know where to turn for help in carrying out their purpose, and had reason to be somewhat afraid of being ridiculed as "ignorant and unlearned men," with a fine conceit of themselves. But when in 1731 some of them got to Denmark with Zinzendorf for the coronation of his kins-

man, Christian VI., they found themselves in a seaport, the capital of a country that had colonies, and met a black slave from the West Indies and an Eskimo from Greenland. Here the eye saw and the hand touched that which the imagination had been busy with. As Paul, when he met Luke the Macedonian at the port of Troas, dreamt that night of a Macedonian, standing on the European shore, beseeching him to come over, and therefore went, so Moravians dreamt thenceforth of slaves in St. Thomas and Eskimos in Greenland in need of their help, and therefore went to them ; though they were told, falsely, that those who wished to preach to slaves must themselves become slaves, and that he who went to Greenland would not have where to lay his head. So Moravian Missions were born, and the world was made the richer by a passion for the salvation of others, the story of which has kindled the flame of faith and love in many a heart since. For example is still one of the greatest powers for good or evil. It was not long before the other Danish islands, Santa Cruz and St. Jan, were occupied, and Holland, a greater power then than now, was approached. News had reached the Moravian community that the Dutch in their colony of South Africa denied to the Hottentots Christian teaching and baptism. At once there was a volunteer ready to go and right this wrong—a man who had served his apprenticeship to hardship by six years in an Austrian prison for conscience' sake, and had escaped by a miracle, as it seemed. Having found access to one Dutch Colony, they soon found their way to others—to Guinea, Ceylon, and Guiana.

The Saxon Government about this time issued a veiled threat against the growing Moravian settlement at Herrnhut,

and the Count sought a home to which the exiles could go in case of need. Having friends and correspondents in many lands, he heard that General Oglethorpe was in need of colonists for his new State of Georgia in North America. Negotiations were opened, and soon concluded, for such men as these were welcome as pioneers of civilisation. From this enterprise sprang a Mission to the North American Indians, the Moravian Church in England and America, and a greater movement; for the second batch of emigrants, travelling with John Wesley, an Anglican chaplain, also bound for Georgia, unwittingly filled him with such wonder by their faith, courage, unvarying self-control and helpfulness in calm and storm and rough treatment, that he began a new quest for the peace of God that passeth all understanding, until another Moravian, one Peter Böhler, gave him the missing clue. He then proceeded to kindle such a fire in England and the world as has seldom been seen before or since, and by God's grace shall not be put out.

And thus began the Great Adventure. For these men and women, having once come face to face with the heathen world, grasped its extent and the immense variety of its needs. Their courage and resource rose with every new danger and every new call. "Gens æterna!" cried their leader as he sailed into the harbour of St. Thomas, when one of them met his question, "What shall we do if the missionaries are dead?" with the quiet answer, "Then we are here."

Ere long they were found in India, the Nicobar Islands, Persia, and Tartary; among the heathen of Northern Russia and the Volga; in Egypt and Algiers, and in frozen Labrador. Their sons and grandsons pressed on into

Kaffraria and East Africa ; to Australia and the Western borders of Tibet ; to Jerusalem ; to Central America and Alaska. Some of their attempts failed, and some were little more than exploring expeditions ; but in most of the fields they entered the harvest has been thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold. When the great English Missionary Societies were formed long after, the experience of these pioneers was used by them all.

II.—THE GREAT WATCHWORDS.

The *Unitas Fratrum* has a Latin name, and its watchwords are Latin ; for it dates from a time when Latin was still the international language of Europe, and men had not ceased to expect to catch the ear of their world and to win lasting fame by writing books in Latin. Its very name was a watchword, untranslatable as it is, and “The Brethren’s Church,” “Brüdergemeine,” “Broedergemeente,” “L’Unité des Frères,” however the fine shades of meaning may vary, conveyed the purpose of its existence. Zinzendorf, grasping at its deepest sense, sought and found brethren among Lutherans, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Catholics, and even those whom he, according to the views of his day, could class only as “Sectarians.” It was as easily understood by the Hindu as by the West Indian slave. It set up once more St. Paul’s ideal of a Brotherhood of Man, in which not even colour mattered.

The Church’s seal is a lamb bearing the resurrection cross, from which streams a banner, and the motto that surrounds this emblem is : “Vicit Agnus Noster, Eum Sequamur” (“Our Lamb has conquered ; let us follow Him,” or more freely, “Our Lamb is on ahead, con-

quering ; up, and after him ! ”). In his Greek Testament Zinzendorf had John’s Gospel placed first, as governing the interpretation of the whole. So the conception of the Lamb of God, Sin-bearer and Conqueror, compassionate and irresistible, Sufferer and Destroyer of suffering, became the Alpha and Omega of the printed page and of its whole interpretation. The Lamb of God had gone forth to War, and this was the war-cry of His followers. No war-cry has been more stirring and effective ; and in saying this, one does not forget that the history of the great war-cries has been the history of the rise and fall of Empires, religions, and epochs. Under its influence the nobleman left his ease and the scholar his books for the field ; the potter became the spiritual leader of a Church, and the carpenter its bishop ; the day labourer became a hero, and the tailor a “ veray parfit gentil knight.” Whatever task presented itself, there were always men and women ready for it. Their numbers were few, but for that very reason their standard was high ; for whenever the world raises the level of its code of right and wrong, of heroism and poltroonery, it has first tested the new standard in a little circle, whose example has inspired ever-widening circles. Before the Lamb with His fair army can stand on Mount Zion, His precepts have to be learnt by 12, by 70, by 500, and the things, which the first disciples could not yet bear, have to be taught later to those whom they have inspired.

The next watchword ran : “ *Ad utrumque paratus* ” (“ Ready for either ”), and as the illustration of its meaning an ox was depicted, standing between the altar and the plough. The graves in many a land from Australia to Alaska bear witness to the fact that the story of a short life

may be as important and as fruitful as that of the veteran who wears his strength out with toil. What is more important is that this motto gave strength to a "spirit of service," which made men willing to go anywhere and do anything that belonged to the duty either of sacrifice or toil.

"In necessariis unitas ; in dubiis libertas ; in omnibus caritas " ("In essentials, unity ; in things doubtful, liberty ; in all things, charity "). This was the principle which made it possible for men of diverse races and of such varied antecedents to pull together and to join in worship, even if their views were different on many a point. It was the only spirit in which a Union of Brethren was possible, especially in face of such diversity. Nothing else could have brought the Church unbroken through these two centuries ; without a firm faith in these watchwords she could not carry on at all.

III.—THE PRESENT TASK.

"It is something to be a missionary. It is something to be a follower, however feeble, in the wake of the Great Teacher and only Model Missionary that ever appeared among men, and now that He is head over all things, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, what commission is equal to that which the missionary holds from him?" So said David Livingstone. It is not given to every man to open as many closed doors as he did, but it is the steady work of all the lesser men that makes real progress.

When the first jubilee of Moravian Missions came round, there were 165 missionaries, men and women, with 27 stations from which they carried the Gospel to the surrounding country, and at which they had schools and industrial work. Their converts numbered about 14,000.

At the centenary in 1832 there were 209 missionaries at 41 stations, with 40,000 converts under their charge.

At the third jubilee in 1882 there were 312 men and women at 99 stations and 16 out-stations, with 115 other preaching places, and 76,646 names were on their official lists.

The statistics for this year (1923) are imperfect, especially with regard to East Africa, in consequence of the war ; but as far as they go, here they are : 271 missionaries, male and female, an unspecified number of ordained native ministers (not separated from the native helpers, given as 2,041), at 265 stations, in charge of 105,711 converts, 22,961 day scholars, and 22, 248 Sunday scholars.

If we follow the course of the sun, we shall find that it never sets on them. Moravians are found among the Buddhists (Hindus and Mohammedans also) of Little Tibet and its neighbouring mountains and valleys. When the hunters and sightseers have gone down to the plains, and winter closes the passes with a barrier of snow, they are the only Europeans who remain up there. Then the winter storms are let loose, which created the religion of these mountains before Buddhism was grafted upon it, and one realises why they are the most priest-ridden people in the world ; for theirs is a religion of fear, because their gods are fiends, who shriek in the blast and overwhelm man and his works in the storm. The Lha may be made propitious, or scared away by prayer-wheels and fluttering prayer-rags, which wave the magic invocation, "Om mani padme hum,"* before his eyes from housetops, bridges, and mountain passes ; but the Lhu is not to be turned to good-

* O Jewel in the Lotus, hail !

will by any means. He dwells underground, especially in marshy places. His presence is proved by the fact that a willow wand stuck into the ground there will grow. Sleep where he hides himself, and he will rack you with pains in spite of the charms you wear. Cut down his tree, that he caused to grow, and he will smite you with leprosy, for which there is no cure. The very housegod is a creature with the head of a boar, and must not be vexed.

If the lama (the superior one), the priest, had not learnt the means of cowing these gods, or limiting their power, it would go hard with the laity, "the owners of alms," "those bound by fear," or "the benighted ones," as they are called. None of the processes of daily life, or its social functions, are safe without him. There are tens of thousands of lamas in the monasteries. There are astrologers to map out life for you and to read the stars; but they have to be paid, and the common man learns to lay out for himself the omens of every-day life, and to be something of an augur. But he dare not sow or reap without the lama. Then there is merit to be gained, the store of which determines the conditions in which you will be born when the ceaseless turning of the wheel of life carries you into your next existence. The words, "Ye must be born again," filled Nicodemus with astonishment. The Buddhist would interpret them in the same way as Nicodemus did, but he would say, "Of course!" Pilgrimages and the circumambulation of sacred places, especially by a series of prostrations, are among the most sure means of gaining merit. You can have charms for any purpose. One makes you bullet-proof; another wards off disease; yet another keeps husband and wife from

quarrelling. But the lama makes and sells all these things.

Into such an atmosphere the missionary carries not only education and medicine, but also the spirit of trust and love; for "the Father is greater than all, and nothing can pluck you out of the Father's hand."

At Jerusalem is a Leper Home, called "Jesus' Help," and all who enter there, Mohammedan, Jew, or Christian, know that all the kindness and nursing freely given by the Moravian Sisters is given in Jesus' name, and for His sake. Some who visit the home are horrified at seeing so much human misery assembled in one place; but there is laughter there too.

Tanganyika Territory has not recovered from the war and its consequences. The missionary is preacher, teacher, and in future he will have to be more than ever a doctor. A doctor and two nurses are among the staff, and they will have to fight for the health of the people.

Kaffraria and the rest of Cape Colony have many features in common, though they differ in so many respects. The problems of race are intensely acute. The Africans outnumber the Europeans by 6 to 1½. The differences between Briton and Boer are great, but not so great as those between them and the native population, or between the two branches of the latter—Coloured and Native (Kafir). The problem in South Africa is how to fit these heterogeneous elements into the life of a single State, when the social, industrial, economic, and political conditions are so unlike. Take the question of wages. Are the white worker and the native to be paid alike? If so, the white receives too little or the native too much; but if the employer is to get his labour in the cheapest market, the

white worker may as well pack up and go elsewhere. Every part of the problem bristles with the same kind of difficulties. The Coloured or Native teacher draws a higher salary than the missionary. In the United States a majority of whites has to deal with a minority of Africans, and finds the problem difficult. Here it is worse. The only parts of South Africa where a solution has been found for the problems that dog the steps of the white man are Khama's country and Basutoland, and there the missionary has done much to secure it. In Kaffraria the missionary and the magistrate, working hand in hand, are trying to find a way. But at the root of the whole matter are spiritual realities and human nature, and only Christ can give the spirit in which such things can be dealt with. In bringing Christ and His Spirit to the Coloureds and Natives (Kafirs) of South Africa, Moravian missionaries took the lead, and they are still taking their share.

In South America Dutch Guiana, or Surinam, and British Guiana, or Demerara, adjoin one another. The land is so low that embankments are required to protect it from inundation by the many rivers or by the sea. Until lately it had scarcely any roads of any kind, except the plantation tracks. But this great alluvial flat has been made to produce in abundance sugar, cocoa, and rice. Towns are few and far between. The Dutch and the English have ruled the whole land in turn, and now divide it almost equally. The descendants of their former slaves have more and more tended to leave the land and flock into the towns, and have long since adopted European habits of life. These form the Christian Church of the land, and their worship, education, and social work are all modelled on European

patterns. To take their place on the plantations thousands of British Indians and Javans, Hindus and Mohammedans, have been imported, and a new Mission has begun among them, and will have to be prosecuted with vigour lest Christianity should be swamped with foreign heathenism. But travel up the rivers, the only way of piercing the tropical forests, that begin where the plantations end, and the way is frequently impeded by cataracts and high waterfalls, as the land rises towards the hills. Here live the Bush Negroes, descendants of the runaway slaves of former times, in real African heathenism. The Wintiman and the Obeahman have more power than the chiefs, and keep them in awe by their sorceries. Snakes, toads, alligators, and even insects are their gods. Stone and tree worship have survived among them. A log, a piece of string, or a bewitched button may become objects of intense fear, or may be relied on to protect from witchcraft, as the case may be. The climate is little less deadly for the civilised negro than for the white man. The natives call it in Negro-English "Dedekondre," Death Country. In these lands the Moravian Church carries on its most many-sided work, for it has to meet every kind of human need. Among other forms of service is its care for lepers; in a garden on the edge of the forest it tends such as come of their own free will, and it helps to minister to those confined in the neighbouring Government compound.

The West Indies have long since become in name at least Christian, and need the services of the preacher, the scholar, and the saint in precisely the same way as we do at home. In ten of these islands Moravians are at work: Trinidad the prosperous; Tobago the beautiful; Barbadoes

the well-tilled ; Antigua and St. Kitts the needy ; Santa Cruz, St. Thomas, and St. Jan, formerly Danish, now American, bought and sold as though they were without inhabitants ; Santo Domingo, a Negro Republic in name, an American sugar estate in reality ; Jamaica, the Pearl of the Antilles, which Columbus called Santa Gloria, the largest and most important British island in the West Indies. The Church in these islands is self-governing, and has to be almost self-supporting, but it has a hard struggle. It is probably more in need of our best than England is.

On the East side of Central America lies the Mosquito Coast—really Miskito—the home of the Miskito Indians and kindred tribes. It is now part of the Republic of Nicaragua. When it was annexed it became possible to go beyond its bounds and seek out the Indians further inland and far up to the North and along the course of the Wanks River and its tributaries. There is scarcely anything man needs to know, if he is to rise above the level of the savage, that the missionary has not to teach these people. The translation of the Bible was long delayed by linguistic difficulties in a land of so many languages and dialects ; but there is no field worked by Moravian missionaries where the people are so eager for the Gospel, which is so obviously to them the power of God unto salvation in every respect.

In California Moravian missionaries work among the remnants of the North American Indians. In 1734 ten Moravians set out for Georgia. The words of their leader, when they were detained in London by unforeseen obstacles, were characteristic, but paradoxical. “ Why are so many difficulties put in our way ? Must one not conclude from that that all will go well ? ” The story of the Indian Mission

is a record of brilliant success, alternating with dire calamity. It began in the east ; it is now in the far west. But " gloom " and " gloaming " are akin, and " at eventide it is light." The Mission in California has about it a suggestion of the peace of picturesque almshouses.

Our Labrador is a land of snow and ice, a long strip of shore about 600 miles in length, between rugged mountains and the deep sea. The first missionary sent there was murdered. Now the Mission is father and mother to a population that would be helpless without it and its ship, the " Harmony." The dog-sledge in winter and the boat in summer are the means of communication. There are no roads and no vehicle runs on wheels. Foxes and seals are the wealth of the land ; the hunter the only man who can earn a living. The Mission ship is his means of getting his produce to market. The greatest calamity the Coast could suffer would be the failure of that little ship to reach it. No ship, no mission ; no mission, no ship ! The missionary was for over a century preacher and teacher, judge, magistrate, and lawgiver, and to a considerable extent is so still. There are no police. The population, always scanty, grows less ; for epidemics, when they come, sweep through the community like a prairie fire through the grass, or like the fire through the buildings at Nain in August, 1921. Yet how soon both man and nature may recover ! Hebron reports an increase. Nain is rising again from its ashes. Eskimo heads and hearts have planned deeds of self-sacrifice for their new church with few parallels on this side of the ocean. It is clear that they also have the spirit of Christ.

At the other corner of the American Continent lies

Alaska, a huge peninsula, one-sixth of the size of the United States, and bought by them from Russia in 1867 to get rid of one possible danger to America. It is a land of great contrasts, containing some of the highest peaks of the Rocky Mountains and miles upon miles of tundra (flat, boggy country). It is a land of gold, and deepest poverty ; of forests and utter desolation. The majority of the inhabitants are Eskimos, nomads in summer, dwellers in sod-huts in winter, hunters and fishers at all times. Like all heathen, they were under the spell of sorcerers, who at once took up the weapons of magic to fight the new religion. On one occasion one of the missionaries went a long sledge journey in mid-winter to visit and help a colleague. He ought to have taken three weeks for the journey, but was delayed by snow and storm. "Now we shall see," said a sorcerer who had had many an encounter with him, "who is stronger, the parson or I, who have raised these storms to prevent his return." At the end of ten and a half weeks the missionary reached home. So far the parson has proved the stronger, or, rather, the parson's God. His mission stations serve over 2,000 Christians, and seek to win yet other thousands. The American Government has taken over from him the management and support of his schools, and he helps the Government to introduce herds of reindeer, and teach the native a new way of life.

In 1932 the Moravian Church will celebrate the bi-centenary of its Missions. When it does so it will have cause to wonder at what God can do with small means, and how He has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty.

TABLE OF MORAVIAN MISSIONS.

West Indies	....	....	commenced	1732
†Greenland	....	....	„	1733
American Indians	....	....	„	1734
Surinam	....	....	„	1735
South Africa	....	....	„	1736
Labrador	....	....	„	1771
Moskito Coast	....	....	„	1848
S. Australian Blacks	....	....	„	1849
Little Tibet	....	....	„	1853
*Leper Home, Jerusalem			„	1867
Demerara	....	....	„	1878
N. W. Alaska	....	....	„	1885
E. Central Africa— Nyassa)			„	1891
„ „ „ (Unyamwezi)			„	1897
N. Queensland Blacks			„	1891

† Given over to Danish State Church, 1902.

* The Leper Work in South Africa was begun in 1818.

The London Association in Aid of Moravian Missions.

Over 100 years ago (in 1817) this Association was formed by other Christians to raise funds for the purpose of helping to send the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, by means of the great Missionary Moravian Church. God has most signally blessed these efforts. Multitudes have been won for His Kingdom—many from the most degraded and backward races. God graciously continues to give rich spiritual blessings to this, the *oldest* Protestant Missionary Church, which *began* its labours to the *heathen* in 1732.

The **first** to the Jews (1736).

The **first** to send out Medical Missionaries (1747).

The **first** to work among Lepers (1818). Actual cures.

Those won from heathenism number **three times as many** as the Parent Church.

EVERYWHERE THERE ARE OPEN DOORS to-day ;
but **EVERY MISSION FIELD IS TERRIBLY UNDERMANNED!**

This means unique opportunities are being lost for lack of funds.

Will you help this work by **Prayer to God** for increased blessing, and a **Contribution** to the

See below. ~~Rev. EDGAR SWAINSON, Secretary,~~

**The London Association in Aid of Moravian Missions,
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Income has not kept pace with increased costs !

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